This Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1-25. (Canceled)

26. (New) A method, comprising:

  executing, by a computing device, business logic expressed in one or more declarative languages, the business logic including a process description, the process description defining one or more flows, one or more rules, and one or more states,

  wherein each of the one or more flows represents a control flow between business functions,

  wherein each of the one or more states represents a legal state transition for at least one business entity, and

  wherein each of the one or more rules represents a business rule or policy enforced on the at least one business entity in an externalized form.

27. (New) The method of claim 26,

  wherein a business process described by the process description includes one or more tasks,

  wherein at least one of the one or more tasks is selected from a library of tasks in which each task has a precondition and a postcondition, and

  wherein the desired precondition and postcondition are automatically determined prior to execution.

28. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein the one or more flows, the one or more states, and the one or more rules are coordinated by a controller software module.

29. (New) The method of claim 26,

  wherein the business logic is executed by a plurality of parties,

  wherein at least one party of the plurality of parties acts as a trusted party for at least one other party in the plurality of parties, and

wherein the trusted party guarantees correctness of a protocol at design time and at run time, maintains records of all interactions, and performs some activities for the at least one other party during the execution of the business logic.

30. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein at least one of the one or more declarative languages is XML.

31. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein at least one of the one or more declarative languages is WSDL.

32. (New) The method of claim 26,

     wherein one or more assertions are associated with a business process described by the process description, and

     wherein the one or more assertions describe one or more preconditions or one or more postconditions at one or more points in the business process.

33. (New) The method of claim 32, wherein the one or more assertions are checked at runtime to ensure that the executing of the business logic is correct.

34. (New) The method of claim 32, wherein the one or more assertions which describe the one or more preconditions are used to check the correctness of the business logic prior to the executing of the business logic.

35. (New) The method of claim 32, wherein the one or more assertions which describe the one or more postconditions are used to check the correctness of the business logic subsequent to the executing of the business logic.

36. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein each of the one or more rules influences the control flow and cause one or more state transitions.

37. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein the business logic is executed via a web-based transport protocol.

38. (New) The method of claim 37, wherein the web-based transport protocol is HTTP.

39. (New) The method of claim 37, wherein the web-based transport protocol is HTTPS.

40. (New) One or more non-transitory computer-readable media having computer-executable instructions stored thereon that, when executed by at least one processor, cause the at least one processor to:

execute business logic expressed in one or more declarative languages, the business logic including a process description, the process description defining one or more flows, one or more rules, and one or more states,

wherein each of the one or more flows represents a control flow between business functions,

wherein each of the one or more states represents a legal state transition for at least one business entity, and

wherein each of the one or more rules represents a business rule or policy enforced on the at least one business entity in an externalized form.

41. (New) The one or more non-transitory computer-readable media of claim 40,

wherein a business process described by the process description includes one or more tasks,

wherein at least one of the one or more tasks is selected from a library of tasks in which each task has a precondition and a postcondition, and

wherein the desired precondition and postcondition are automatically determined prior to execution.

42. (New) The one or more non-transitory computer-readable media of claim 40, wherein the one or more flows, the one or more states, and the one or more rules are coordinated by a controller software module.

43. (New) The one or more non-transitory computer-readable media of claim 40,

wherein the business logic is executed by a plurality of parties,

wherein at least one party of the plurality of parties acts as a trusted party for at least one other party in the plurality of parties, and

wherein the trusted party guarantees correctness of a protocol at design time and at run time, maintains records of all interactions, and performs some activities for the at least one other party during the execution of the business logic.

44. (New) The one or more non-transitory computer-readable media of claim 40, wherein at least one of the one or more declarative languages is XML.

45. (New) The one or more non-transitory computer-readable media of claim 40, wherein at least one of the one or more declarative languages is WSDL.

46. (New) The one or more non-transitory computer-readable media of claim 40,

wherein one or more assertions are associated with a business process described by the process description, and

wherein the one or more assertions describe one or more preconditions or one or more postconditions at one or more points in the business process.

47. (New) The one or more non-transitory computer-readable media of claim 46, wherein the one or more assertions are checked at runtime to ensure that the executing of the business logic is correct.

48. (New) The one or more non-transitory computer-readable media of claim 46, wherein the one or more assertions which describe the one or more preconditions are used to check the correctness of the business logic prior to the executing of the business logic.

49. (New) The one or more non-transitory computer-readable media of claim 46, wherein the one or more assertions which describe the one or more postconditions are used to check the correctness of the business logic subsequent to the executing of the business logic.

50. (New) The one or more non-transitory computer-readable media of claim 40, wherein each of the one or more rules influences the control flow and cause one or more state transitions.

51. (New) The one or more non-transitory computer-readable media of claim 40, wherein the business logic is executed via a web-based transport protocol.

52. (New) The one or more non-transitory computer-readable media of claim 51, wherein the web-based transport protocol is HTTP.

53. (New) The one or more non-transitory computer-readable media of claim 51, wherein the web-based transport protocol is HTTPS.

54. (New) A system, comprising:

    means for storing business logic expressed in one or more declarative languages, the business logic including a process description, the process description defining one or more flows, one or more rules, and one or more states; and

    means for executing the business logic,

    wherein each of the one or more flows represents a control flow between business functions,

    wherein each of the one or more states represents a legal state transition for at least one business entity, and

    wherein each of the one or more rules represents a business rule or policy enforced on the at least one business entity in an externalized form.